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Through CHAOS to COMMUNITY?

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SIXPENCE

THROUGH CHAOS TO COMMUNITY?

I. Reconstruction and World Revolution

II. The Religious Issue in Reconstruction

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May 1944

I.—Reconstruction and World Revolution

The term "reconstruction" as applied to the situation we have to face shortly, when we have done with fighting one another, has always worried, and sometimes annoyed me. At the best it is an inappropriate metaphor which irritates the philosopher's natural suspicion of metaphor, even at its best. At the worst, it betrays an attitude of mind which was in part responsible for our failure to keep the peace, and which will certainly fail to make a peace that can endure. It is a state of mind which combines the noblest of good intentions with a profound misapprehension of the conditions of their realisation.

For to talk of "reconstruction," if we take the metaphor seriously, betrays two errors. It suggests that the war has destroyed something that has to be restored; and, more seriously, that we are somehow separate from what has been damaged, the architects of a demolished building, who can survey the damage and make plans for its restoration. But the world of human activities which war has torn apart and reorganised is not a material habitation; it is a nexus of relationships between man and man; and the war which has changed it to a form that hurts and distresses us was not a natural accident. It did not happen to us: we made it; or perhaps, to speak more accurately, it grew out of us, as the flowering of our way of life and our way of thought. The desolation we see around us is the reflection of ourselves in the mirror of history; the reflection of our habits, our ignorance and our perversity. The peace we establish will work itself out to the same distressing and disastrous conclusion if the experience of war has not changed our habits and revealed our folly to our own consciences. The laws of causality hold in the sphere of human life and human history as they hold in the natural world, for as a man soweth so also shall he reap and no amount of idealism or good will can alter them.

This is not a plea for a fuller determination to apply our principles more urgently. On the contrary, it is a suggestion that these principles themselves are part of the thing that requires "reconstruction." What I should like to do in this short address is to indicate the need for a radical change in the way in which we think about the problem and seek to solve it. I am afraid of the *idealism* of our planning, and of the attitude to life from which it emerges.

For when we plan a reconstruction of the life of Europe, we tend to think of ourselves as planners and architects, facing the rubble heap that was once an edifice; and in doing so we fail to see ourselves as part of the ruin. We imagine that our standards of judgment, our knowledge, and our methods of work are adequate and satisfactory; that the material for the rebuilding is at our disposal and passive to our hands. Against this natural illusion I would like to set the fact that we are not our own masters; that we belong to the world—not the world to us; that it is to the causality of the world-process that we must attend rather than to our own wishes or our own judgments of what is desirable and good.

When we think of ourselves as architects of the better world we concentrate upon two things—the plan which we think best, and the specific efforts which we must make to get it accepted and put into operation. This of itself removes the whole question from the general activities of what we call "ordinary life" and makes it a special and separate business. Now the activities of planning, and the efforts to persuade people to adopt the plan are almost entirely mental or spiritual activities; as are the idealisms and the conceptions of interest or value which they embody and express. The important character of all such activities is that they have in themselves no effects in the external world—which is the real world. It is only if and when they are put into practice that they enter the world of reality and become causes. More than this, when they do become effective, it is only as an addition, and indeed a very small addition, to what is already effective. Life does not wait on our decisions. It goes on acting and effecting the future; and the fate of our deliberate organised effort is decided by this stream of ordinary, practical life that just goes on, and must go on, whatever governments decide. Our effort to assert our plan is not what determines the result. It has its place; it has its quota of causal efficacy; but in comparison to the total cause of what will come about it is a very small cause, interacting with far more powerful causes which will certainly overwhelm it if it works against them and not with them. Yet there are points at which such efforts may be decisive, as when a child's push can send a poised rock crashing into the valley below.

Habit and History

This effective stream of causal efficiency which is the major determining force lies principally in the everyday behaviour of millions of ordinary people like ourselves all over the world. The steps we take, day by day, to provide ourselves and our dependents with the necessaries, the luxuries and the amusements of daily life; the service we exact and the services we render; the means we take to get our

own way with our fellows—these and such-like common acts build up the intricate pattern of effort which determines the course of history. Very little of it is deliberate and conscious; hardly any at all is decided in terms of its effect upon the fortunes of empires and peoples. Nor could it be if we wished it. Most of it is matter of habit which from long repetition we take for granted; and most of these individual patterns of habit by which we live what we please to call our private lives, are merely the expression in ourselves and our circumstances of the major patterns of social habit which we call the traditions of the communities to which we belong. This nexus of common life is the stuff of real history: in its interconnection it forms the major cause of all historic process. In the mass it is decisive; and it draws its overwhelming force from the natural necessity of adapting ourselves to Nature and to our fellows. We may make plans; we may even make spasmodic efforts to realise these plans—but we *must* live the daily life.

The part played by habit in all human behaviour is much larger than we normally suppose. It is not merely that a large part of our behaviour is determined by habit. This is true: but it is even more important to observe that our most deliberate and planned activities depend on habit for their execution. We become aware of this—often painfully—when we decide to do something which involves a change in our fixed habits, especially if they are of long-standing. The inertia of habit is very great, and to change the direction of behaviour which it dictates is always difficult, and not infrequently impossible. Seen as a whole, the pattern of a man's habits is what we call his character; and his character, exhibited in action, determines the form of his life, within which, and on the basis of which, his deliberate choices are made. To follow a plan which runs counter to this pattern of habit is possible only if we can alter the pattern of our living: that is to say, change our character.

Reconstruction and Tradition

If it is difficult for an individual to change his habits, what shall we say of any attempt to change the habit-pattern of a whole society, or even of a whole civilisation? For this to come about, many millions of people must change their individual habits of life at the same time, in the same direction. But this is not all. The habits of a society are built out into the institutions through which it lives—into its economic and political structure, into its educational system, and so into the minds and hearts of its members. Social change falls normally within the pattern of habit which is defined in laws, institutions, customs and manners; just as the changes in the life of an individual normally do not destroy the pattern of habit we

call his character. In social life the inertia of tradition—which is the pattern of social habits—is overwhelming. An individual who tries to live against it beyond a certain point will surely go mad. And it is in this vast force of tradition that the major cause of the process of history is to be found. Nor must we forget that our standards of judgment and the moral and spiritual values which shape all our deliberate planning are themselves largely the product of this pattern of social habit, and indeed a part of it.

What conclusion are we to draw from these facts ? The relevant conclusion, I imagine, is this. All our plans for "reconstruction" presuppose, if they are to the successful, that the judgment which they embody of what would be a "good society" and the actions which they propose to achieve it, are compatible with the traditional patterns of behaviour in the people and societies with which they are concerned, and with the unplanned and unplannable forces of development which these contain. The possibility of success in our free action depends upon its relation to the forces of necessity generated in the common daily life of men and women everywhere. If our plans now envisage any radical change in the pre-war society—or, rather, in the society which the war will leave behind it—then they envisage radical changes in the traditional patterns of social behaviour, and set themselves the task of overcoming the inertia of social habit. If what we try to do is opposed to the necessities of common life it is literally *impossible*. To attempt the impossible is to guarantee failure ; and the more wholeheartedly we attempt the impossible, the more complete and effective our failure will be. I say *effective* advisedly; because all action has its effects, and an action which fails is not an action which accomplishes nothing. It is an action which accomplishes what was not intended; perhaps even the opposite of what was intended.

This conclusion is not a pessimistic one ; and I am not attempting to discourage the "reconstructors". What I do wish to discourage is the idealistic and preposterous notion that if "we" can make up out minds what we want, and agree amongst ourselves upon a plan, and then get behind it and push with all our might, we can get what we want. That frame of mind, so widespread amongst us still, is a relic of the primitive belief in magic. We have learned to recognise, in the sub-human world, that there are natural and necessary laws which govern the courses of events; and that it is only by understanding these laws that we can discover how to bend them to our purposes, that we can control Nature only by obeying Nature and co-operating with her. But we resist the application of this great truth in the field of human affairs. We ascribe to

ourselves a freedom from natural law; a capacity to control ourselves and our fellows by the exercise of free will ; and when we fail, we look for somebody to blame, and, if possible, to punish. In most cases, we are merely kicking the stool over which we stumbled in the dark. There *are* laws of history; there are necessities in the processes of human life and human intercourse which determine harmony or discord, war or peace, progress or decay. And it is only by understanding these that we can control them ; only by discovering what is inevitable that we can find the freedom to do what is desirable. It was only by patient efforts to understand the laws which tie us to the surface of the earth that we discovered at length how to build aeroplanes and fly. In the same way it is only by understanding the laws which prevent us from putting an end to war that we shall ever achieve a stable and durable peace.

These laws of social behaviour are not absolutely fixed. They are indeed laws of social change. But the more fundamental structures of social habit have a great resistance to change—as they have in individual experience. We do not change our fundamental habits unless we must; unless we find that they continuously and increasingly frustrate our purposes. Even then we are more likely to change our purposes. It is, in most cases, only when our purposes cannot be changed, when they are purposes imposed upon us by the necessities of life itself, that we can change the foundations of our established ways of life. It is even more so in the field of social habit. There, indeed, it would be all but impossible were it not for the continual succession of the generations, which compels society to rebuild itself in new lives from the beginning. We need have little hesitation in stating one law of social change at least. No fundamental change of social form takes place except under the pressure of extreme necessity.

A fundamental change of social form is what we call a revolution. This is indeed the definition of a revolution, and the important point o notice is that it is a change of *form*, not of substance. What I have said up to this point has been designed to clarify the meaning of this definition. A revolution is a fundamental change in the habits of life that a society has built into its character and its institutions and its codes of behaviour. Consequently we can say—and with understanding—that a revolution never happens unless it must; unless there is absolutely no other way out. In this sense a revolution is always necessary and involuntary: it is quite impossible to *make* a revolution; and when it does happen, it is impossible to go back on it. It runs its appointed course to a new social form that is not chosen, but necessitated. It happens when life cannot go on under

the old forms; when social habits frustrate instead of furthering and supporting the necessary purposes of common life; and it ends only when a new form is established in which the frustration has disappeared, and the conscious and unconscious components of social behaviour are again in equilibrium.

It has become a commonplace to say that we live in a revolutionary period. There is ample evidence that this is strictly true. The clearest evidence is to be found in the continuous frustration of social purpose and social effort from which we suffer. When our habits fail to support our conscious purposes, our natural tendency is to increase the effort which we make to realise them. The effect is to increase the scale of our failure. Any golfer knows what happens when he "presses." The more effort he makes to achieve his aim, the more the fault he wants to correct increases. Our social life began to show this character obviously from about 1923. The efforts which were made with the best intentions, and with elaborate preparation and care—such as had never been known in history—to secure international agreements, began to show a consistent record of failure, and made the situation worse, rather than better. The Disarmament Conferences, the World Economic Conference, the Reparations Conferences and the rest provided us with an experience of growing powerlessness and futility. Never in the history of this world was such a mass of good-will and intelligence mobilised behind the effort to improve the economic condition of the world; yet it led only to the great slump. The determination to avoid war, to renounce war as an instrument of national policy were so stimulated in governments and peoples alike that instruments like the Kellogg pact, which would have been unthinkable even a decade earlier, were actually prepared and signed. Yet as the effort increased this war drew steadily nearer. History took on a cataclysmic character. Events ran away with us and defied our control. This is precisely the character of any revolutionary epoch. It is a period of self-frustration; in which the forces generated by the interaction of multitudes in their habitual daily life cancel and destroy their conscious purposes, and their sincere desires. We are driven along a way that we would not to a goal which we have not chosen.

Fear and Violence

The excesses and the violence which we associate with revolution are not essential to it, though they are a natural reaction to the experience which it involves. The sense of our powerlessness to avoid disaster; of consistent failure to achieve what we seriously intend; of continuous frustration of hopes and expectations generates

fear; and when masses of people are afraid they tend to lash out blindly and destructively: they seek for scapegoats to be revenged upon; they follow blindly any leader who can make them feel that he can save them. Fear and violence are closely linked in our emotional make-up; and to abolish violence we must abolish fear. Yet under revolutionary conditions this is excessively difficult. The need is to understand what is happening and why: the impulse is to blame and punish; and these two are incompatible. Success in our efforts towards "reconstruction" will largely depend upon our ability to suppress the impulse to blame someone. Our motto should be, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." This is not the statement of a moral ideal, but of a law of human relationship. If we must blame someone, let us blame ourselves. It is the safer way.

The revolution in which we are involved began, as a national revolution, in Russia, in the course of the first world war. In some ways it followed the pattern of earlier European revolutions, and it was possible to regard it as a belated postscript to the revolutions which destroyed feudalism in Western Europe. But from the beginning it had characteristics of a different sort. It was carried to completion by a group of men with an international outlook, holding a faith which had its origins in Western Europe—in Germany especially; most of whom considered that the revolution in Russia was the first stage of a world revolution, without which the national revolution could not hope to be successful; and throughout the nations of Western Europe it was felt as a threat to the established order. The intervention of the victors in an attempt to overthrow the revolution increased and confirmed this international significance, both in Russia and beyond its borders. The failure of intervention, the success of the new organisation—which demonstrated that a socialist economy was possible; whether or not it was desirable—and the crisis of the great slump developed this process of international tension, until with the triumph of Hitler in Germany the internationalisation of the Russian Revolution was completed. The national revolution in Russia had become the first stage of a world revolution. From this time forward war between Germany and the Soviet Union was, humanly speaking, inevitable.

The conception of a world-revolution played a considerable part in the earlier stages of the Russian revolution. But it was thought of as a succession of national revolutions on the Russian model, more or less stimulated and supported by Russian initiative. This was a complete mistake. A series of national revolutions is not a world-

revolution: and such revolutions, if they had been supported by the Soviet Union, and carried out as deliberate imitations of the Russian model, would certainly have failed—as indeed some did. For they break the principle that a revolution can only happen when it must and cannot be brought about by any deliberate engineering. The idealism of Trotsky, like all idealism, was wishful thinking, which could not have succeeded; and it was identical with the fears of just such a policy being adopted by the Soviet Union which were so widespread in the West, and which did so much to determine the foreign policies of European governments.

What was necessary to produce a world revolution was a revolutionary answer to the Russian Revolution outside the borders of the Soviet Union; an organised attempt to prevent the revolution happening elsewhere by revolutionary action. The fascist movements provided this; and the success of Hitler's forces in Germany was decisive. It created a negative national revolution in Western Europe to oppose the positive national revolution in Eastern Europe. These two revolutions, both of which had international implications of universal scope, were bound to collide, and to create a revolutionary world-war. Indeed, this was the meaning and purpose of the Nazi movement from the start. When people talk of Hitler's attack on Russia as his great blunder, they betray a complete misunderstanding of the present crisis. The destruction of Soviet Russia was the *meaning* of Hitler's war: and what Hitler added to our understanding of the situation was the demonstration that this implied the unification of the world by military conquest. From the time that both the Russian and the German revolutions were definitely established in their own countries, it was possible to say that there would be war between Germany and the Soviet Union, and that the Soviet Union would win it.

A World Revolution

In this war, then, we are in the second stage of a world revolution. The national revolution in Russia, which was the first stage, has been internationalised by the German counter-revolution. The third stage, which we envisage as the "reconstruction" period, will be upon us when Germany has been defeated. Our success in this third period will depend very largely on our understanding that it is part of a world-revolution; and here we are apt to be at sea, because there is no parallel to this situation in past history. In the national revolutions with which we are familiar, there is a struggle between two parties, one of which is fighting for the creation of a new social form; while the other is fighting to maintain the traditional form. This

latter party necessarily includes the existing government, the function of which is to carry on the traditional form, of which it is the central organising principle. Consequently a national revolution takes the shape of a revolt against the government. But a world revolution in our time cannot be a revolt against the world government, because there is none. There is no central governing authority against which the revolution can be directed. Consequently it is much more confused and incoherent; and much less conscious and controllable. It must, however, at its critical stages take the form of war between nations. It is the nations of the world which line up on opposite sides of the revolutionary process into two opposing camps. To the victors—who cannot be, in the long run, the opponents of the revolution—falls the task of establishing world-unity. If they fail to do this, then, since revolution is a necessary process, there will be another world war. The process cannot end until its inherent purpose is realised.

II.—The Religious Issue in Reconstruction

It is already widely recognised that the social sickness of our time can only be cured by the setting up of some kind of world order, though the doctors disagree widely about the kind of order that is needed, and about the manner in which it can or should be established. But they seem to be largely agreed that the problem is one of organisation, either political or economic or both together. It is this assumption that I have called in question; and before going farther, it may be helpful to summarise the argument which has just been concluded.

There are two points of major importance for all who plan or work for the society that will emerge from the war. The first is that all our conscious social purposes and efforts can never be more than minor elements in deciding what will happen. Far more efficient is the unconscious force of social habit, which is made up of the interaction of millions of human individuals living their daily lives in relation to one another. This mass of human activity, each single element of which is a human act which hardly ever looks, or indeed can look, beyond the immediate situation in which it is performed, has its own form and direction. For it is part of a way of life that has been built up within some human society, and which has become second nature to all those who belong to its tradition. It is this massive complex of common life, expressing the inertia and the

momentum of established social habit, moving through and along the channels of social institutions, which maintains the continuity of history, and determines what future is possible. It is the common life of the common people of the world that must carry any deliberate plan that we try to put into operation, and provide its motive force. Any plan which is incompatible with this unconscious pressure is still-born. It cannot be executed. It may be inherently excellent, it may be scientifically elaborated and tested, it may have universal good-will and idealism to wish it well, yet it is futile if it runs counter to the habits of the common life of those whom it affects.

The second point is this. We are in this war living through the second crisis of a world-revolution. A revolution is a change in the form of social habit, and consequently in the institutions which are the public embodiments of a traditional system of social habit. Such a change, since it is a change of social *form*, can only be brought about by the pressure of absolute necessity. It happens only when the institutions of society cannot any longer support the common life. Consequently a revolution comes from below, as an explosion of suppressed energy directed against the institutions of society and their guardians; and once it has begun its course, it moves to a determined end—the setting up of a new form of social habit which will support the common life once more. In such a situation any plans we make and seek to realise must go *with* the revolutionary process if they are to go at all; for in a revolutionary period only revolutionary plans can succeed.

The Total Revolution

But ours is a world-revolution, and that is something new in history. The Russian revolution was national; so was the Nazi revolution in Germany. But the second was the opposite of the first, and draws its meaning from its predecessor. The clash of these two opposite revolutions—the positive and the negative—is the meaning of this war; and this makes the total revolution of our time *not* national, but international; a revolution which does not set two factions of one nation in conflict, but sets nation against nation. And a world-revolution moves towards world-unification. What has produced it is that the separate national forms of the common life can no longer support the common life of each nation. In all lands the common life has been invaded by forces from beyond the national borders. What happens under alien skies spells happiness or misery, frustration or fulfilment for ourselves and those we love. Only a world tradition, a world-wide community of social habit can provide the stable framework within which the common life can escape

disaster anywhere. This is the end towards which the world revolution drives. Whether it will need a world government I do not know; it will certainly need world institutions of some sort. But the main point is that these can only function properly, if at all, so far as they are the expressions of a common way of life throughout the world. The great issue of our time—and the issue that is least regarded—is how there can be produced, throughout the whole world, a common habit of daily life.

This is the religious issue in reconstruction. The forms of the common life are our morals and manners. But these are not effective, they do not govern our ordinary behaviour so long as they are merely codes which we accept with our minds, and reckon as the principles which we *ought* to follow. As such they can only serve in the narrow sector of our life which is conscious and deliberate; and then only clumsily, as the dictates of duty, in opposition to our natural motives. For all motives are emotional, and the greater part of our daily life must spring from the structure that training and tradition have given to our emotional character. From this part of us we act instinctively; from reason only spasmodically, with effort, and occasionally. And the focus of our emotional structure lies in our habits of action in relation to one another. The religious issue in human life is the relation of man to man in the common life, an issue which is summarised and made universal as the relation of all men to God, the personal absolute. The task of religion is to produce and to sustain in us that structure of emotional motive, and therefore that system of habitual action in the daily round of the common life, that alone can make social life possible and can keep it unified and harmonious. Only religion can create and maintain the community of the personal life of mankind; for religion alone speaks direct to the emotions of the common man in the common life. We are persons; and persons are united only by emotional bonds. We are at one only so far as our love and sympathy extends. We can escape enmity and strife only so far as our habits of daily life are emotionally adjusted to one another; so far as in fact and in action we care for one another.

The traditions of common life by which we live are the creations of religion. They are so ancient and so deeply buried in us that we almost invariably take them for granted and treat them as natural conditions of human life everywhere. So when we in England conceive a plan for the reconstruction of Europe after the war, we make a *British* plan, assuming that it will be carried by a British tradition of common life. This is quite absurd. It means that we take it for granted that all the peoples of the world are British at

heart, and would behave automatically like Britishers if they were given the opportunity. If such an attitude of mind were conscious, it would be conceited and insulting. But it is almost wholly unconscious and inevitable. For the systems of common social habit in the contemporary world are effectively national, and they are defined by contrast. Contact between different nations tends to emphasise the contrast, by bringing the differences into conflict, and so producing misunderstanding and mutual dislike. Since unconsciously we take our own traditional standards as the norms of good behaviour we begin, in secret, to judge and despise one another. I remember an incident that occurred some years ago in a Paris restaurant. An Englishwoman and her daughter had an argument with the waiter. When the waiter retired, the mother turned to her daughter and remarked in a loud voice, "He treated us just as if we were foreigners!" Now, in the world revolution, as the barriers between the national systems of habit are broken, our situation is even more disturbing. We are *all* foreigners in the new world-without-frontiers. For there is no common system of daily life to sustain our efforts to co-operate. The common system of habit for a world community remains to be created, and religion is the instrument for its creation.

It is natural to ask whether Christianity can undertake the task. Of all the "universal" religions, it is the only one of which the question can be asked without obvious futility. The only alternative would be the appearance of a new religion altogether; and that is at least totally incalculable. The wind of the spirit bloweth where it listeth. So let us consider what can be considered reasonably, whether Christianity could create a common habit of daily life for the world as a whole.

The Role of Christianity

There is a great deal to be said in favour of an affirmative answer. In the first place Christianity has already performed a very similar task with great success in the past. European civilisation was the creation of Christianity. The early Church, after the collapse of the Roman Empire, took hold of a motley collection of tribes and peoples, at all levels of culture—some of them, like our own, almost barbarous—and made one civilisation of them. It did this, mark you, not by a political unification—for our civilisation has never been politically or economically unified—but by establishing a unity of common life, based on common standards of value governing human relationships. It created a common tradition for Europe, out of which has grown the whole effective progress of the world

ever since. The problem facing us now is very much the same. It might be thought that that first success was on a much smaller scale. But was it? For we have to judge in terms of communications when we think of the size of the world. And in these terms the world that was unified by Christianity was perhaps larger than the whole earth today. The differences to be bridged were hardly less tremendous. Why should Christianity not perform this miracle again?

Objectively considered, the conditions for success are good. The ground has been prepared in advance by the expansion of the Christian religion over the earth. Historians of the future may reckon the missionary movement of the nineteenth century one of the critical turning points of world development. There are very few human groups of any size left in which Christian communities have not been planted. Christianity is the traditional religion of the Americas, of Western Europe, of the Soviet Union and of the white populations, of their dominions, colonies and outposts. The European tradition is the cradle of the whole process of world unification which is going on, and that tradition has its roots in Christianity. In the great non-Christian centres of population—in China, India and Japan—the Christian communities are playing a part in the transformation of these ancient civilisations out of all proportion to their numbers. It is not really a matter for surprise that the great leader of China's millions today is a Christian, and that he has commended Christianity to his people as a guide and consolation in their suffering and striving through the long years of their terrible ordeal. The conditions of war in China, I am told, have thrown into high relief the difference between Christian and non-Christian habits of behaviour. The indescribable miseries of the far East by flood, famine, pestilence and indiscriminate bombing have set a stage where the Christians virtue of Chinese converts have played a conspicuous and impressive part.

In the West we have come to accept self-sacrifice and devotion to the needs of strangers who are homeless and helpless and broken as a natural human quality. We have almost forgotten that its effective source in history is the parable of the good Samaritan. The social behaviour of Nazi Germany should remind us of the rock from which we were hewn, by showing us what happens to a highly civilised European nation if it reverts for inspiration to its pre-Christian heritage. In Japan there is a high probability that defeat will sweep away the feudal order and the Emperor-worship on which it rests. In that case it is certain that the Christian co-operative movement associated with the work of Kagawa will play an important part in the renewal of that great people. In India the evidence is not so clear; but the reason for this is clear enough. There Christianity is

the religion of the foreigner who rules the land by right of conquest; and the struggle for freedom against the Christians inevitably lends an extrinsic vitality to the old native gods. Anyone who knows something of the effect of Christianity on India, even under the incubus of foreign rule, will agree, I imagine, that when India is free, its Christian communities will play a notable part in the social transformation that will follow. In the West we sometimes think of Christianity as a spent force. Perhaps that is because we have taken from it all that we can take until it has brought the rest of the world up to our level of civilisation.

There are two things about Christianity which we would do well to remember in this world-revolution which moves to the inevitable world-unification. The first is that there is in it a continuous and unavoidable psychological pressure towards the unification of humanity in a single brotherhood of common life. It is the religion of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, in which, as St. Paul expressed it to the primitive church, there is "neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus." The universality of Christianity is not ideal merely, as it is in other world-religions. It is a practical demand for a transformation of actual society; a purpose to be realised in the material life of the world. Any society whose tradition has been formed by Christianity cannot escape, though it may repress or deny, the pressure in its own substance towards the destruction of privilege and the breaking down of barriers between man and man. A Christian nation which denies human equality in its internal structure generates revolution within itself; and a Christian nation which denies the human equality of other nations, in a world where the influence of Christian ideas is world-wide, generates war. That is the first thing we have to remember. History has made Christianity a psychological force for world unification of immense and increasing magnitude. And this force is now largely independent of the temporary fortunes or prestige of the Christian churches.

The Hebrew Tradition

The second thing is that Christianity is not the product of Europe. Europe is the product of Christianity. Christianity is an Eastern religion, a semitic religion. The unification of Europe by Christianity was the triumph of the religious genius of the Jewish people. The importance of this may not be apparent at first sight. It arises from the fact that the social tradition from which Christianity issued—the Hebrew tradition—was radically different from the Græco-Roman tradition into which it penetrated when it made the religious

conquest of Europe. Europe accepted Christianity only partially, by way of compromise; and it has always maintained a strong resistance to complete acceptance. Consequently our Christianity is not Christianity in itself, as it were. It is what we have made of Christianity by a combination of acceptance and rejection. We cannot take *our* Christian tradition as any criterion of Christianity itself, and the Christianity which may create the tradition of common life for the unified world of the future may do so on a pattern very different from that with which we are familiar. What China makes of Christianity may be very different from what we have made of it. Even within the older Christendom there is not one, but several Christian traditions, which have generated and helped to maintain divergent forms of social life. One wonders sometimes whether it would not be better to consider them as quite different religions, in spite of their common origin and the common theme on which they are all variations. Our general ignorance of the deep distincton in social outlook between Eastern and Western Christianity, for example, is one of the difficulties that have to be overcome if we are to understand and co-operate successfully with modern Russia; and it is interesting to speculate what form Christianity will take in the Soviet Union when all its priests and teachers have had their primary and secondary education grounded in Marxist philosophy.

But we must be a little more explicit on this issue. The particular form of the compromise which Europe made with Christianity must be remembered if we are to understand the religious issue in the reconstruction of Europe. That compromise was made when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Now, the structure of the Roman Empire was incompatible with the social principles of Christianity. How then was it possible for the Church to accept such a position? It was only possible by renouncing the *materialisation* of the society of common life that the Christian teaching demanded, and by transforming Christianity into a purely spiritual religion, dealing with *another* life and *another* world; and by turning its social demands into ideals which we *ought* to strive towards, but which could not be attained by ordinary men in this wicked world; and only realised, even within limits, by a few saintly persons. This is the meaning of the contrast and the conflict of the spiritual life and the material life, of matter and mind, of materialism and idealism which runs through the whole history of our culture. It is the compromise of dualism. It makes religion a separate and separated aspect of life and of culture. It distinguishes in the end between the secular life and the religious life, and holds them apart. But its simplest and most direct significance lies in this, that it enables us to keep the pagan tradition of Greece and Rome

as the standard of our material society, that is, of our political and economic life; while aspiring after a very different conception of fellowship, with quite other standards of personal and social relationship, in our thoughts, and in our imagination. For the spiritual life, divorced from the material, is in fact the life of the imagination, the world of phantasy. Even in friendships, we share our experiences, our interests, our joys and sorrows; but not our money—not our substance. The separation of Church and State, of religion and politics, is the institutional embodiment of this compromise.

It is, however, an inherently unstable compromise, because it is in fact not possible to hold the life of the mind apart from the material life. The effect of the attempt has been to make our history one of struggle, war and revolution, with a direction of progressive advance towards the Christian social ideal. The pressure of necessity tends to the unification of mind and matter, of theory and practice, and within the limits of our dualism there are only two possible solutions. Either the Church must gain control of the material field, or the State must conquer the spiritual field for itself. The mediæval world was driven in the first direction. The modern world has followed the second. Neither can be successful. For the practical life is dominant in the real world, and its effective standards are Graeco-Roman, not Christian. The near triumph of the Church in the Middle Ages corrupted and disrupted it, and ushered in the triumphant paganism of the Renaissance. The triumph of the State in our time leads also to the Totalitarian paganism against which we fight today. Yet these triumphs of paganism are short-lived and ephemeral. For the Church has filled the minds and imaginations of the common people with the vision of the brotherhood of man, and in the crises of State and Church it is this that they seek to create for themselves. So through revolution we have moved steadily nearer to the materialisation of the Christian social demand; and not least in the Russian revolution of our own time, for all its attack upon religion.

The Jewish Issue

This pure spirituality, then, is what we have made of Christianity. It is not Christianity in itself. So when we ask whether Christianity may perform the miracle of unifying the common life of the world as a whole, we must not imagine that we are asking whether our version of Christianity can be adopted by the whole world as the universal religion. That is neither thinkable nor desirable. Indeed, it seems to me that the condition of the creation of a common Christian habit of life for the world, as the essential basis for any world order, is

that there should be a revolution in our version of Christianity; and in particular that its pure spirituality should be destroyed. For that spirituality is simply a high-sounding name for the refusal to allow it to govern the practical, material life of the world. Or to put it otherwise, it is our way of clinging to the classical tradition of Greece and Rome as the guide and inspiration of our secular culture. Christianity itself is Jewish.

And this brings us back to earth, and to the struggle to which we are now committed. It means that the religious issue in the reconstruction of our own Europe is the Jewish issue. We have echoed the Prime Minister's assertion that our object is to destroy Hitlerism and all that it stands for. Have we sufficiently noticed the central place that the Jew holds in Hitlerism? Hitler himself has never forgotten this. In an early declaration of his programme he said, "We stand for the true Christianity against the Jewish materialism." To achieve this aim he declared that it was essential to eradicate the Jewish influence from European civilisation. That this is the very heart of Hitlerism the agony of Jewry in occupied Europe bears unanswerable witness. Yet what does it mean? It is clear that the real Jewish influence upon European civilisation is the influence of Christianity. What else can it be? The rest comes from Greece and Rome and from the primitive barbarisms that were first civilised by Greece and Rome.

What, then, does Hitler mean by his claim to stand for "true" Christianity against the Jewish "materialism." Does he not mean that he fights to keep Christianity purely spiritual, in the realm of dream and ideal; to prevent its materialisation in the practical life of the common people of the world? For if that were to happen, if the compromise were broken and the Christian impulse burst the shackles of the idealism in which we have bound it and was realised in the habits of our common life, what would become of all the other things he stands for; of racial superiority, of conquest and war, of dictatorial authority and totalitarian obedience of the weak to the strong? When he identifies Jews and Bolsheviks, the meaning is the same. For communism is a violent attack upon idealism, and therefore upon the Christianity which it identifies with idealism and pure spirituality; and towards a materialism of common life. And what it attempts, half-blindly, to materialise in the common life comes to it from the Christian tradition. This indeed throws a new light upon the principal objection to the view that Christianity might be the instrument of world unity. The Christian religion, it is urged, is steadily losing ground in its own civilisation, and the forces of progress in its homelands are turning from it. The answer may be

that Europe is not its home, and that the rejection of the form which we have given to it may be necessary before it can become effective in the daily, common, material life of mankind.

In this sense then I believe that the religious issue in reconstruction is the central issue and that it takes concrete form in the Jewish problem. The Jews can never accept what *we* have made of Christianity; for the religious genius of their race and their tradition cannot recognise as real a religion that is about another world than the actual world in which we live; a religion which is merely ideal and merely spiritual; a religion which does not constitute the bond of unity of a real human community in this world. To the Jewish conscience religion must constitute the unity of the common life. Consequently the Jewish people cannot be absorbed in a civilisation like ours, but must remain marked out and separate. To defeat Hitler and all he stands for we have to solve the Jewish problem; and to solve that problem we have to unify the life of the world, not by power, not by organisation, but by creating the habits of a common life which shall be the same for all men everywhere. This is a religious task because the unity of the common life is a religious unity. And if it is achieved by Christianity, which in its substance is a Jewish religion, it will solve the Jewish problem by creating a world community in which the Jews will no longer be necessarily separated. I cannot do better than conclude with a quotation from Karl Marx. "The Jewish problem will never be solved," he said, "except in the solution of the whole human problem."

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